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No. III.

MACHINE FOR BLOCKING STRAW-BONNETS.

The Silver Medal *was presented to Mr. V.* Price, *8 St. Ann's Court, Soho, for his Machine for Blocking Straw Bonnets; a Model of which has been placed in the Society's Repository.*

4 South Row, Golden Square,
Sir, *March* 15, 1842.

I take the present opportunity of forwarding to your notice a model of a machine for pressing straw, Tuscan, and Leghorn bonnets, of which I beg to offer myself as the inventor to the honourable Society to which you belong.

I have been working it for a livelihood for two years. The merits of the invention I must leave to your superior judgment, but permit me to say I am now working it for the undermentioned respectable parties, to whom I am at liberty to refer: Messrs. Barklay and Co., Quadrant, Regent Street; Mrs. Pearson, Regent Street, straw-hat manufacturer, &c.; Mr. Poland, 90 Oxford Street, furrier and straw-bonnet manufacturer; Mrs. Esquilant, Oxford Street, straw-bonnet manufacturer.

Having said so much, I shall now explain the working of the machine.

First, the length is three feet; the breadth two feet, nine inches; and the height five feet.

Secondly, you will perceive there are two levers connected by an iron bar, which is to act as a weight to lift the box-iron that is fixed in front of the top lever; the tread or foot-board in front of the bottom lever is to give the pressure that may be required.

The box-iron works almost on an union-joint, but not quite. The iron spindle is taken out when I commence working, and the piece of wood with the upright peg in the centre is fixed with one end across the rail in front of the machine, and the other end slides in the square hole under the socket for the iron spindle. The row of pegs under the block-shelf is to place the bonnets on while blocking them.

The cross rail close to the foot-board is to put one foot on while working the foot-board with the other.

I should have said the shifting piece of wood with the upright peg in the centre is to place the blocks on to press the tips of the bonnets, the shifting piece of wood must be drawn, when placed in its proper position, to the second notch, to place the block on, and then placed to the first notch, and it becomes fixed. The net is to catch the bonnets in case they should slip.

When the tips are done in the way I describe, the shifting piece of wood is placed to the left, and the iron spindle is put in the bass cocket to do the bands and brims, by means of working the handle of the iron spindle instead of the handle of box-iron, as you would when pressing the tips.

The machine can be used either sitting or standing, but to me the latter is much the most confortable, being a cripple, having suffered from a humour under one knee, arising from aneurism, and having had the main artery of the thigh tied. Indeed, I should not now be able to follow my business but for the invention I submit to your notice, and hope and trust you will judge liberally of its merits, and reward it accordingly.

I remain, Sir, &c. &c.

To the Secretary of the VINCENT PRICE.
Society of Arts.

The object of bonnet-pressing is to give to the work a finished appearance, after the plait is sewn together.

This operation is usually performed by placing the bonnet on a wooden block of the required form, and pressing it with a heated box-iron, a damp cloth having been first applied to it to prevent the material from being discoloured.

The blocker increases the pressure of the iron by throwing the weight of his body upon it, a practice frequently productive of serious bodily injury.

The object of Mr. Price's machine is to obviate this serious defect in the ordinary mode of blocking bonnets. The accompanying view exhibits the several parts of the machine.

A, fig. 1, is one of the blocks in a position to receive a bonnet; B is the box-iron, with its handle C, which is hung with double joints and swivel to the lever D, which is connected with the treadle E by means of the vertical bar of iron F, the weight of which is sufficient to overbalance the box-iron B and treadle E, and raise them up as shewn by the dotted lines.

Instead of standing, as usual, the blocker sits on the stool G, and by his feet on the treadle lowers the box-iron, which he can guide and turn in any direction by its handle C.

The middle upright bars H and I of the frame are made double to serve as guides to the lever D and treadle E, and also to receive the moveable cross-bar J, which supports the block A. When the sides are to be blocked the bar J is lifted out of its place, and the axis K, fig. 2, is put into the metal socket L (shewn by dotted lines, fig. 1), the block A being placed on the end of the axis, as seen in fig. 2. To the axis K is attached an arm M, which is moved by either hand of the blocker, so that the bonnet may be turned quite round under the iron: the arm has a balance weight N. O O is a net stretched across the whole space before the blocker, on which the bonnet may be laid. P and Q are two shelves on which to place blocks of different sizes.

Fig. 1.